

Message Text

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SUBJECT: USSR WATCH PRODUCTION -- DATA FOR USITC

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SUMMARY. SOVIET PRODUCTION OF TIMEPIECES INCREASED BY SOME 2.8 MILLION PIECES IN 1976 AND AGAIN IN 1977. SOVIET EXPORTS "CLOCKS AND WATCHES, INCLUDING MECHANISMS" TO THE U.S. IN 1976 (LATEST YEAR FOR WHICH DATA IS AVAILABLE) WERE ABOUT 1.79 MILLION PIECES (0.677 MILLION IN 1975). VOLUME OF EXPORTS TO THE U.S. THUS ROSE ABOUT 2.7 TIMES. VALUE OF 1976 EXPORTS TO THE U.S. WAS 3.6 MILLION RUBLES (ABOUT U.S.\$4.9 MILLION AT OFFICIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE), AN INCREASE OF ROUGHLY 100 PERCENT OVER THE 1.775 MILLION RUBLE VALUE OF 1975 EXPORTS. WE WILL REPORT 1977 TRADE STATISTICS WHEN THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. USSR PRODUCES A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CLOCKS AND WATCHES. OFFICIAL STATISTICS SHOW TOTAL PRODUCTION IN 1975 OF 55.1 MILLION PIECES, OF WHICH 31.3 MILLION WERE WRISTWATCHES. IN 1976 PRODUCTION WAS 57.9 AND 33.3
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RESPECTIVELY. THE 1977 PLAN TARGETS WERE 60.3 AND 34.8 RESPECTIVELY, AND A TOTAL OF 60.7 MILLION PIECES WERE PRODUCED (NO FURTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE). A MORE DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORIES OF SOVIET WATCH PRODUCTION IS NOT AVAILABLE AT THE EMBASSY, BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT OVERWHELMING PORTION OF PRODUCTION IS CONVENTIONAL TIME PIECES EVEN THOUGH DIGITAL WATCHES HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE AT RETAIL

STORES FOR AT LEAST 2 YEARS AND CLOCKS FOR ABOUT A YEAR.

2. ACCORDING TO "FOREIGN TRADE OF THE USSR IN 1976", SOVIET CLOCK AND WATCH EXPORTS, INCLUDING MECHANISMS (CTN 97011, 97046), TOTALED 16.164 MILLION PIECES, VALUED AT 58.071 MILLION RUBLES, IN 1975 AND 17.823 MILLION PIECES, VALUED AT 67.065 MILLION RUBLES, IN 1976. PRINCIPAL CUSTOMERS 1976, WITH DATA IN THOUSANDS OF PIECES AND 1975 DATA IN PARENTHESES, WERE: POLAND 2,377 (2,158), U.S.A. 1,788 (677), ROMANIA 1,338 (1,151), U.K. 1,104 (1,106), G.D.R. 959 (929), BULGARIA 846 (858), AND CZECHO-SLOVAKIA 758 (730). SOVIET COUNTRY BY COMMODITY ENTRY SHOWS EXPORT TO THE U.S. IN 1976 OF 1,787,878 PIECES, VALUED AT : 3.599 MILLION RUBLES; COMPARABLE FIGURES FOR 1975 WERE 677,227 PIECES AND 1.775 MILLION RUBLES. (SIMILAR INFORMATION ON SOVIET 1977 EXPORTS SHOULD APPEAR IN THE 1977 VOLUME WHOSE PUBLICATION IS EXPECTED IN A FEW MONTHS' TIME. WE WILL PROVIDE AN UPDATE THEN.)

3. OUR ATTEMPTS TO ELICIT FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE SOVIET WATCH INDUSTRY AND TO TRY TO RECONCILE U.S. AND SOVIET TRADE STATISTICS MET A STONE WALL. WE DOUBT THAT A SIMILAR EFFORT WOULD GET ANY FURTHER NOW AND DO NOT PLAN TO MAKE ONE UNLESS DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS IT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. TOON

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